HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR RADIO (Original Scripts)

Series 1. Episode 8. Christmas at Aldershot.

TONY HANCOCK
With

MOIRA LISTER, BILL KERR & SIDNEY JAMES
In

"HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR"
No. 8

With
KENNETH WILLIAMS

INCIDENTAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY WALLY STOTT and RECORDED BY THE BBC AUGMENTED REVUE ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY HARRY RABINOWITZ

SCRIPT: RAY GALTON & ALAN SIMPSON

ANNOUNCER: ADRIAN WALLER

PRODUCED BY DENNIS MAIN WILSON

REHEARSALS: SATURDAY 18th DECEMBER !954: 10.00am. CAMDEN

RECORDING: SATURDAY 18th DECEMBER 1954: 3.15 - 4.00pm. CAMDEN

TRANSMISSION: TUESDAY 21st DECEMBER 1954: 9.30 - 10.00pm. LIGHT & GOS

REPEATS: SATURDAY 25th DECEMBER 1954: 10.30 - 11.00am. GOS

SUNDAY 26th DECEMBER 1954: 3.15 - 3.45pm. GOS

CONTINUITY:
(Live) THIS IS THE BBC LIGHT PROGRAMME

GRAMS: (ON RED LIGHT) "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 1

ADRIAN: We present Tony Hancock with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr and Sidney James in…

GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 2

TONY: (ALL EXCITED - BREATH) "Hancock's Half Hour".

GRAMS: "HANCOCK OPENING" - PART 3

ADRIAN: With only a few days to go to Christmas, everybody is busy getting ready to enjoy this season of peace and goodwill to all men...even Tony Hancock has broken into his piggy bank for his Christmas preparations….

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" UP & UNDER

TONY: (SINGING TO HIMSELF)

BILL: (COMING ON MIKE) Hey Tub, have you finished the decorations yet?

TONY: Shan't be long. Just putting the chains up.

EFFECTS: (RATTLE OF HEAVY IRON CHAINS)

BILL: Tub, paper chains, not real ones. We're celebrating Christmas nineteen <u>fifty</u> four, not <u>eighty</u> four. Where's the Christmas tree?

TONY: We haven't got one yet.

BILL: Well, what are you waiting for?

TONY: A fog….and you'd better cut a hole in the roof. I'm going to whip that one from Trafalgar Square.

BILL: Think of it - Christmas. No tree, no decorations….

TONY: Yes, I thought we might have been able to afford something <u>better</u> this year.

BILL: Well, it's not my fault. It's that slate club I'm treasurer of. Someone ran off with all the money last week - the money that I kept in my own room.

TONY: Disgusting.

BILL: Yeah. Twenty five pounds.

TONY: (INDIGNANT) Twenty <u>four</u>!

BILL: Tub….

TONY: (COVERS UP) Like me new suit?

BILL: You spent all that money on a suit? What about me?

TONY: Oh, I haven't forgotten you.

BILL: No?

TONY: No. You're Bill Kerr, I'd recognise that face anywhere. You're the bloke who -

BILL: Alright, alright. I just thought you might have got me something.

TONY: Have a look at this.

BILL: For me?

EFFECTS: (RUSTLING OF PAPER)

BILL: Why Tub, how beautiful. A piece of wallpaper.

TONY: (ANNOYED) It's a tie. What's the matter, don't you like it?

BILL: Wellllll, frankly… ("Yes?")...well honestly…("Yes?")...cross my heart..("Yes?").....<u>no.</u> It's too loud.

TONY: You'll find 'em underneath.

BILL: What?

TONY: Earplugs. Now put that tie on!

BILL: Alright…..there.

TONY: Hmmmm. Now what can you wear with it?

BILL: How about a long beard?

TONY: Ungrateful, that's what you are. After what I went through to get it.

BILL: What?

TONY: A plate glass window.

EFFECTS: (OFF MIKE. KNOCK ON DOOR)

MOIRA: (OFF MIKE) Anybody in?

TONY: Ah! It's me beloved Moira. Quick, hair oil.

BILL: Hair oil.

TONY: After shave lotion.

BILL: After shave lotion.

TONY: Clean shirt.

BILL: Clean shirt.

TONY: Waistcoat.

BILL: Waistcoat.

TONY: Spat's.

BILL: Spat's.

TONY: Jacket.

BILL: Jacket.

TONY: (CALLS) Come in.

EFFECTS: (QUICK DOOR OPEN)

MOIRA: (OFF MIKE. SHARP SCREAM)

TONY: Trousers.

BILL: Trousers. Hallo Moira.

MOIRA: Look boys...mistletoe!

TONY: My word, yes, stirs the old blood up a bit, don't it.

BILL: Go on Tub, get in, do your stuff.

TONY: Do you think she'll mind?

BILL: No, of course not.

TONY: Alright then. (SLIGHTLY OFF. SERIES OF KISSES)

MOIRA: (PAUSE. ON MIKE) Are you two enjoying yourselves.

TONY: Sorry Moira - I had me eyes shut.

MOIRA: Well, don't open them yet Tony.

TONY: (EXCITED) Alright, I won't. I'm ready.

MOIRA: (SERIES OF KISSES)

TONY: (PAUSE) Are <u>you</u> <u>two</u> enjoying yourselves?

BILL: Sorry Tub, I had <u>my</u> eyes closed.

TONY: Good, it'll save me the job.

MOIRA: Well, come on boys, give me a hand with all those parcels outside.

TONY: Parcels?

MOIRA: Yes, parcels. I knew you two wouldn't have anything to eat this Christmas..

TONY: Nothing to eat? I beg your pardon, we've got our Christmas dinner already cooking. Spent two hours trussing up that lump of corned beef.

BILL: Yeah, and we've already made arrangements for our Boxing Day dinner. Where is it? Puss, puss, puss, puss…

EFFECTS: (CAT SNARLS & SPITS)

TONY: Funny how they know, ent it?

MOIRA: You can forget all that. I spoke to Father.

TONY: Oh, him.

MOIRA: Yes, him.

TONY: Old Padlock Purse.

MOIRA: He is not! I told him we'd all be alone at Christmas, so he's sent us down a big hamper.

BILL: Not your mother?

MOIRA: No - and there's nothing wrong with my mother.

TONY: There must be - she doesn't like me. Everytime she comes here she's the same. If she stuck her nose up any higher, the rain would get in.

MOIRA: I think you're both very ungrateful. Daddy has laid on a complete Christmas dinner. It's all in these parcels.

TONY: No - I'm sorry Moira. I'm accepting nothing from your father. I thought I'd made that quite clear in the past. He and I have nothing in common. I still have me pride - and I'm certainly not going to lower myself by accepting charity from him.

MOIRA: What a pity. There's a lovely turkey here.

TONY: Knife.

BILL: Knife.

TONY: Fork.

MOIRA: Wait for it. This has got to last all over the holiday - and I've got some extra stuff for the party we're throwing.

TONY: Oh good, I was getting a bit worried about that. It's hard to get merry on a glass of cold water and half a dozen grapes.

BILL: Well come on, let's see what we've got. Let's get the stuff out of the parcels.

EFFECTS: (RUSTLING OF WRAPPING PAPER)

TONY: Ah, mixed nuts.

BILL: Put 'em in the bowl.

MOIRA: Crystalised fruit.

BILL: Put 'em on the sideboard.

TONY: Side of ham.

BILL: Put it in the larder.

MOIRA: Christmas pudding.

BILL: Leave it where it is.

MOIRA: Six bottles of whisky, four bottles of brandy, five bottles of gin, three bottles of champagne, six bottles of rum, six red wines, six white wines, and four crates of beer.

TONY: Well, that should see me alright. What about ….

MOIRA: Put them down. You're not having any alcohol this year.

TONY: Eh?

MOIRA: We're not having a repetition of what happened last Christmas.

TONY: And <u>what</u> do you mean by that?

MOIRA: I saw you. You stood on the Christmas cake, set light to your hair and said "Look everybody, I'm a candle".

TONY: Well, it got a laugh, You don't have to worry about me. I can take my drink.

MOIRA: Yes...and when everybody else wasn't looking you took there's too.

TONY: I didn't touch a drop, so help me.

MOIRA: You had six bottles and <u>everybody</u> helped you.

BILL: Who cares? The point is we're going to have a wonderful time this Christmas after all. Oh boy, I can't wait. Sitting in front of a roaring fire, a drink in my hand, enjoying the old chestnuts…

TONY: We're not having the radio show on <u>this</u> year.

BILL: But it'll be great all the same. This looks like being the first good Christmas I've spent since I left the folks in Australia.

TONY: I expect the same goes for them.

EFFECTS: (OFF MIKE. RAT A TAT TAT ON STREET DOOR)

KENNETH: (OFF MIKE. CALLS) Postman!!

TONY: Ah, more Christmas cards I expect. I'll get 'em.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

TONY: Good morning postman.

KENNETH: Morning sir. Two for you today.

TONY: Thank you.

KENNETH: Er...Merry Christmas sir.

TONY: Oh...same to you.

KENNETH: Thank you sir.

TONY: A pleasure.

KENNETH: I er...I've been delivering your post all year now sir.

TONY: Congratulations. Splendid record.

KENNETH: Three hundred and sixty five days, come rain or shine, through muck and slush, never missed a day sir.

TONY: No, you haven't have you. Well done.

KENNETH: Merry Christmas sir.

TONY: Yes - and you.

KENNETH: I think I've done a good job, haven't I sir?

TONY: Excellent.

KENNETH: No cause for complaint?

TONY: None at all. You're a good lad.

KENNETH: I've always been cheerful, haven't I sir?

TONY: Yes, you have.

KENNETH: In spite of the low money we get.

TONY: Yes - you have indeed.

KENNETH: Yes….Merry Christmas sir.

TONY: Merry Christmas.

KENNETH: Um...kids won't get many toys this year, can't afford it you know.

TONY: Oh, hard luck.

KENNETH: Merry Christmas sir.

TONY: Merry Christmas.

KENNETH: (STARTS HUMMING)

TONY: (LETS HIM HUM FOR A BIT THEN JOINS IN) Here, postman.

KENNETH: (QUICKLY) Yes sir?

TONY: What are you holding your hand out for? Not raining is it?

KENNETH: No sir, but I was hoping a little drop of..er..snow might sort of drop into me palm so to speak, if you get me meaning sir.

TONY: Bit of snow, eh?

KENNETH: Yus.

TONY: Well, here's a penny, the thaw's set in. Now get your foot out of me door.

KENNETH: Aaaah, you mean so and so. (GOING OFF) Wait till I tell the boys. I know somebody who's football pools aren't going to get there on time next year. (GOES OFF MUTTERING TO HIMSELF)

TONY: (SHOUTS) Hoppit. Hope you get your hand caught in the letter boxes.

KENNETH: (RIGHT OFF) All your letters'll be soaking wet next time it rains, I'm telling you.

BILL: (COMING ON) Hey Tub, what's the trouble?

TONY: Oh nothing. The postman's getting a bit obstrep...obstop...ostap..doing his nut, that's all.

MOIRA: Who are the letters from?

TONY: Haven't looked yet. Let's see. One's from a bloke called "Ohms".

MOIRA: Omes? Let me have a look. That's "On Her Majesty's Service"

TONY: What's it all about?

MOIRA: I don't know, but I think it's Top Secret.

TONY: How do you know?

MOIRA: Well you know that little celluloid window in the envelope.

TONY: Yes.

MOIRA: The curtains are drawn.

TONY: Give us it here.

EFFECTS: (LETTER BEING OPENED)

TONY: Oh no! NO!! NOOOO!!!!

MOIRA: Tony - what's wrong!?

TONY: It's me Z Reserve calling up papers. The War Office has called me to the colours.

BILL: So they finally got around to yellow. (LAUGHS) Poor old Tub. Called up. When have you got to go?

TONY: Tomorrow.

BILL: (LAUGHS RAUCOUSLY) Tomorrow. You'll miss Christmas. Christmas in the Army when we've got all this food here. There'll just be Moira and me here...eating together - drinking together - dancing together. (COUGHS)....Together. (SINGS HAPPILY - "This is the Army") You'll be on Guard duty. (SINGS)

TONY: (SWEETLY) Oh, William.

BILL: (LAUGHING) Yeah?

TONY: I forgot to tell you. There's another letter here. For Private Kerr.

BILL: What??? Oh no! They can't do this to me.

TONY: (LAUGHS)

BILL: (TEARFUL) The Army want me.

TONY: They must be short of pull throughs.

MOIRA: Oh, this is terrible. At Christmas of all times. What does the War Office actually say Tony?

TONY: Let's see. (READS) Dear Tony. Her Majesty's Government cordially requests the pleasure of your company at a little get together at Aldershot Barracks this week. Dress optional. Bring your own spear.

MOIRA: (FIRM) Tony, you can't go. It's Christmas.

BILL: But Moira, this is the Army.

MOIRA: I can't help that. I've made all the preparations. We've all been looking forward so much to this Christmas...and I'm not going to let them spoil it. You can't go, that's all there is to it.

TONY: But Moira, I can't just not turn up.

MOIRA: If you were half a man you'd ring them up and tell them you can't come.

BILL: If he were half a man, they wouldn't want him anyway.

MOIRA: Go on Tony, ring them up. Tell them you'd very much like to go but you've made other arrangements for this Christmas.

TONY: Alright, but on Christmas Eve, don't be surprised if a Father Christmas comes down the chimney, six feet tall, wearing a red hat and white gaiters.

MOIRA: Stop arguing and get on the phone.

TONY: Oh - alright.

EFFECTS: (RECEIVER UP. DIALING)

TONY: Hallo. Aldershot Barracks? I'd like to speak to the Manager. Hallo - Monty? Tony here. How are you? You're worried? You still can't find it? Are you sure he sent it? Well look Monty, I'll tell you what I'm phoning about. We got your letter..and well..it's very nice, very kind of you….yes...but me and Bill can't make it this week. ….No. Yes but….Yes, but Monty...I know but...well you see it...yes...of course, but...I know that….Well there's no need to take that attitude. Alright then, if you put it that way, we'll come.

EFFECTS: (RECEIVER DOWN)

BILL: What did he say?

TONY: I don't know...something about blindfolds and early in the morning against a wall, I don't know. I think we'd better go.

GRAMS: LINK

ADRIAN: Aldershot Barracks. The latest batch of Z Reservists, including Privates Hancock and Kerr has just arrived and they are receiving their first taste of Army discipline from the kindly, benevolent, understanding Sergeant James.

SIDNEY: (SHOUTS) Alright, alright, let's have you. Get fell in. You're in the Army now, and let's get one thing straight. You make trouble for me, and I'll make trouble for you. On the other hand, you be nice to me..and a fat lot of good it'll do you. I don't suppose you wanted to come into the Army over Christmas, did you. Well, neither did I. I got my Z papers same as you lot - so seeing as I can't have a good time over Christmas this year, I'm going to make ruddy sure you lot don't either.

TONY: Here Bill, I didn't think old Sid James would be called up again. I thought they'd disbanded his Regiment.

BILL: They had to - he'd flogged all the equipment.

SIDNEY: Silence in the ranks. Now then, let's have your names. See how many members of the Burke's Peerage we've got amongst you. We'll start from the end. Yes you - the one with the face like half a pound of prime Cheddar.

KENNETH: (OFF) Fred Smith.

ALAN: (OFF) Bert Brown.

ADRIAN: (NEARER) Charlie Green.

TONY: Anthony Alouitious St. John Hancock the Second.

SIDNEY: I said your name, not your medical history. So it's you is it Hancock - and Billy boy eh?

BILL: (EAGER) Yeah. Hiya Sid.

SIDNEY: Searg. Just because you know me, you needn't think you're getting any privileges. I'm going to work you two like horses.

TONY: You can't do that. I know my rights. I'm a human being.

SIDNEY: Oh no you're not - you're soldiers.

TONY: (TAKEN ABACK) Well! Of all the…. I wish I hadn't come.

SIDNEY: (ON MIKE) Now the first thing for you lot is a medical examination….Find out whether you're still alive. Right - get into three ranks. Cover off. Squad! Aqua-a-ad….Shun! Right turn! By the left, quick….

TONY: (OFF MIKE. CALLS.) Sergeant!

SIDNEY: What do you want?

TONY: Can I walk in front with you?

SIDNEY: Get back in line. By the left, quick - march.

EFFECTS: (MARCHING FEET)

SIDNEY: Left, left, left, right left, left, left…..oh blimey. (SHOUTS) All except Hancock - change...STEP.

EFFECTS: (CHANGE STEP)

GRAMS: "SERGEANT HANCOCK "

SIDNEY: Squad...halt! Here you are Sir. This lot just came in this morning.

KENNETH: Right you are Sergeant, I'll take them one at a time for vaccinations. I'll take the fat one first.

SIDNEY: Alright Hancock, fall out….I said out!....not down!

TONY: I just copped the size of that needle.

KENNETH: Now, don't worry Private, this won't hurt you. Now where's that book. Let's see now. (READS IN UNDERTONE) Take the hypodermic in the the right hand, pull plunger back, place against skin and push…

TONY: (LOUD AGONISING GROANS)

KENNETH: I haven't touched you yet.

TONY: Just practicing.

KENNETH: Now - just get the needle ready.

TONY: Here, hold on. It looks a bit blunt to me.

KENNETH: (HAPPILY) Yes, it's the dartboard that does it. Now steady.

TONY: Go easy….(YELLS) Fool!

BILL: Hey Doc, you poked the needle in too far.

KENNETH: What makes you think that?

BILL: The scar's come up on the bloke behind him.

SIDNEY: (OFF) Alright you men. Next call - the Quartermaster's Stores...get your uniforms. By the left...quick - march.

GRAMS: "SERGEANT HANCOCK"

SIDNEY: Right, you've got your uniforms, all except your boots. What size do you take Kerr?

BILL: Eights.

SIDNEY: Here's a sixteen - cut it in half. Next.

TONY: Me Sarg.

SIDNEY: Blimey Hancock, look at the size of your feet. I've never seen such big plates. What were you before you joined the army?

TONY: I used to stamp out forest fires.

SIDNEY: Ho, yes, very funny.

TONY: (LAUGHS) Yes, wasn't bad. I'm quite a card you know.

SIDNEY: Shutup! Right. You've finished for the day. Just one thing. Anybody going sick tomorrow morning?

TONY: Yes me, I am.

SIDNEY: Oh, and what's wrong with you?

TONY: Trouble with me nose. Catarrh. Can't breathe.

SIDNEY: Lucky man, we've got fish for supper. DISMISS!

GRAMS: LINK

EFFECTS: (PAIR OF FOOTSTEPS ON PARADE GROUND)

BILL: What a way to spend Christmas. I wonder what Moira's doing Tub.

TONY: Probably sitting up there in my little empty flat, surrounded by all those bottles of drink, crying her eyes out.

BILL: Why?

TONY: I brought the corkscrew with me. (ON MIKE) Well - I'm no mug.

BILL: There's no point in walking about here all night. Let's go over and see what's going on in the Mess.

TONY: Where <u>is</u> the Mess?

BILL: In here. Come on.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN. RIOTOUS PARTY. JANGLE PIANO ETC. DOOR SHUT. CUTS NOISE)

BILL: My mistake, that's the Officers' Mess.

TONY: Where's our one then?

BILL: This is it. Come on.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN. MANTOVANI'S "CHARMAINE". DISCREET CHATTER)

KENNETH: Good evening messieurs.

TONY: Good evening Pierre. Usual table - under the palms?

KENNETH: Certainly messieur.

BILL: Say, this is quite a change from the old days isn't it?

TONY: Yes, same old waitresses though. Look, here comes Aldershot Annie.

MOIRA: (COCKNEY NAAFI GIRL) Hallo boys!!

TONY: Hallo Annie. Thought you got demobbed in 1945.

MOIRA: No dearie, I'm still with it. The Army's the only place for a girl like me.

TONY: But you're the only girl here.

MOIRA: I'm not complaining. Now - what do you want, we haven't got it, no I'm not coming out with you tonight and the sardines are off.

TONY: Well, my friend and I would rather care for a little hors d'oeuvres.

BILL: Followed by crepe suzette and pate de foie gras.

TONY: Just a hint of chicken a la king with pommes de terre au crème.

BILL: Followed by gateau Napolitain cooked in a dash of Chartreuse '37.

TONY: And smothered in creme caramel.

MOIRA: (CALLS) Ada!!..Beans on toast, twice. You two haven't been here long have you?

TONY: No, we only got here yesterday and do you know that… Can I have another cup of varnish please...as I was saying we -

MOIRA: Come on boys, hurry up and finish your food, we're closing in a minute.

BILL: Alright. Before we go, sling us one of those fairy cakes.

EFFECTS: (WHISTLE ON MIKE. BONK - CLOSE)

MOIRA: Oh, blimey, one of the currants has fallen out.

EFFECTS: (DOOR BURSTS OPEN OFF MIKE)

SIDNEY: Alright, alright you two men, on your feet. Now I suppose like the rest of the four thousand herberts here, you two are looking forward to Christmas dinner tomorrow.

TONY: Very much.

SIDNEY: Good, you can get down to the cookhouse and cook it.

TONY: Us? Cook for four thousand soldiers?

BILL: We don't know anything about cooking.

SIDNEY: Ooooh, you poor lads..when they find out. Now get down to the cookhouse - at the double!

GRAMS: "HANCOCK IN SPRING"

ADRIAN: And so Privates Hancock and Kerr began their special Christmas duties, preparing a delicious Christmas dinner for four thousand starving soldiers. Nearer and nearer crept the hour at which serving was to commence. Then at twelve o'clock, the Duty Officer walked in, picked up a spoon, dipped it into the gravy, raised it to his lips and….

EFFECTS: (HORRIBLE CHOKING BLOODCURDLING SCREAM. BODY FALLS TO FLOOR)

TONY: Alright Bill, serve it.

BILL: O.K. - wait till I get in the armoured car.

TONY: Armoured car? How can you serve gravy in an armoured car?

BILL: I'll pump it through the gun barrel. I'm not touching that stuff with my hands.

TONY: There's nothing wrong with it. Little thick possibly..but it's good gravy. Go on, cut yourself a slice. Here we'd better get the hors d'oeuvres ready. How long have those three and a half minute eggs been on?

BILL: Four and a half hours.

TONY: Never mind, give 'em another ten minutes and we'll flog 'em to Joe Davis.

BILL: Pass me my gas mask.

TONY: Why/

BILL: I'm just going to open the oven.

EFFECTS: (KNOCK ON DOOR)

BILL: Come in.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPEN)

KENNETH: Excuse me, do you mind if I look around?

TONY: No, no, carry on.

KENNETH: Thank you. Ooh, tch,tch,tch. Oh no. Gr Ooooh Aaaaah, tch, tch. Ugh. Ooooh no. Tch, tch, tch. Ugh. Gr Ooooh Aaaaah.

EFFECTS: (DOOR SHUT)

BILL: Who was that?

TONY: Philip Harben. Ah, it's no good Bill. Everything's going wrong. Just look at this toad in the hole.

BILL: What's wrong with it?

TONY: All hole and no toad. What are the men going to say. Hard day out on the assault course, starving hungry..and when they get back, what have we got to offer them - four thousand platefuls of hole. One hiccup and they're empty.
(line missing, my guess).

BILL: There she is - over there rolling out the pastry we made.

EFFECTS: (CHUGGING OF STEAMROLLER. PULLS UP)

MOIRA: Is this pastry flat enough now boys? The Pioneer Corps want their steamroller back.

TONY: Let's have a look at it. No, that's no good, it hasn't got a fancy edge. The men won't eat a piecrust without a fancy edge.

MOIRA: What shall I do?

BILL: Nip down to the Armoured Corps and get 'em to run round the edge with a Centurion tank.

MOIRA: Half a mo. I've got an order here. One hundred beans on toast.

TONY: Right. Hundred plates.

BILL: Hundred plates.

TONY: Hundred knives and forks.

BILL: Hundred knives and forks.

TONY: Hundred bits of toast.

BILL: Hundred bits of toast.

MOIRA: Haven't you forgotten something?

TONY: Oh yes. One bean and a book of raffle tickets. Right. Grub up!

GRAMS: "COMFY DOMESTIC HANCOCK"

TONY: Well, that's dinner finished. How much food have the men left Annie?

MOIRA: Let's see. Two hundred and eighty three buckets of soup. Eighty four hundredweight of potatoes. Ninety eight binfuls of turkey. Three hundred and forty two Christmas puddings….and ninety two static water tanks full of custard.

TONY: That's marvellous.

MOIRA: Why?

TONY: It's more than we started with.

BILL: Cooking! I didn't join up for this. I want to see some action. I want to be out there with our boys, fighting for dear life.

MOIRA: Any more dinners like that and you will be.

EFFECTS: (DOOR OPENS)

SIDNEY: Alright you men, at ease. Atten..tion. Shoulder spoons. Preseeeent...cruets. Now then. That dinner wasn't very successful was it?

TONY: We did our best. Four thousand's a lot to cater for.

SIDNEY: I've got good news. You'll only have two thousand for tea.

BILL: Where's the rest?

SIDNEY: In hospital. I've had a lot of complaints about the dinner, so I've come round to investigate. I want to inspect the food. Where's the next meal?

BILL: Over there on the table.

SIDNEY: Oh yes. What's this stuff in tomato sauce? Looks like unravelled balaclava helmets cut up into foot lengths. I suppose it's spaghetti.

BILL: No, sir.

SIDNEY: What is it then?

BILL: (APOLOGETICALLY) Unravelled balaclava helmets cut up into one foot lengths.

SIDNEY: Disgusting.

BILL: Why?

SIDNEY: It's my helmet.

MOIRA: Oh don't be too hard on the boys Sergeant. Why they're two of the finest cooks who ever blancoed a burnt pie crust.

SIDNEY: Well, I don't know about that. I've had some serious complaints.

TONY: What about?

SIDNEY: The cheese for one thing. The men say you keep it too long.

TONY: Nonsense, our cheese is lovely and fresh. I'm just going to have a bit for me tea. Go on Bill, cut me a lump.

BILL: I can't, it won't keep still.

TONY: Well, don't just stand there - wrestle with it.

SIDNEY: This is disgraceful. I've never seen such terrible food in my life. I've a good mind to put you on a charge.

MOIRA: Oh, don't do that Sergeant. They're not as bad as you think. They're both good cooks, I know they are. Why some of their Cornish pasties contain some of the finest meat Gordon Richards ever threw a saddle over. Give 'em another chance sir. Let them cook supper tonight. They can do it, I know they can.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK'S A BUSY BEE"

ADRIAN: And so Privates Hancock and Kerr were given another chance. They were allowed to cook the Christmas supper. Everything they had at their disposal was put into the preparing of this meal. Nothing was spared. Cost was ignored. The meal was served… and then…

EFFECTS: (BIG BATTLE NOISES)

ADRIAN: The men...mutinied!

GRAMS: "HANCOCK RUMBLED"

EFFECTS: (BATTLE NOISES)

BILL: (OVER) Quick, Tub, they're after our blood. Barricade the door - shut the windows! We're in a real mess now. It's all your fault. You and your rhubarb tart. I should have suspected it when I saw you painting the celery.

SIDNEY: Any sign of them?

TONY: No.

SIDNEY: Shove a tin helmet up on the end of a stick.

EFFECTS: (MACHINE GUN FIRE & CLANKS OF HITTING HELMET)

SIDNEY: Good. Now stick another one up.

BILL: Why?

SIDNEY: We can corner the market in second hand green strainers.

EFFECTS: (EXPLOSION)

MOIRA: Look, they've blown a hole in the wall.

TONY: Quick, nail that bit of pastry over it.

MOIRA: Alright.

EFFECTS: (HAMMERING)

TONY: Why, has the pastry broken?

MOIRA: No, the nails have bent.

EFFECTS: (EXPLOSION)

BILL: Aaaah. Tony we're finished. Look. They've started using atom bombs. One's just burst on top of your head.

SIDNEY: That's his chef's hat.

BILL: Bighead.

MOIRA: Look, here they come again...and we've run out of ammunition. What shall we do?

BILL: Don't worry. You pour boiling custard over them while i bash 'em to death with the mince tarts.

SIDNEY: That's no good. Drop a sponge cake on top of them.

BILL: Good idea, help me lift it up.

BOTH: (GRUNT WITH STRAIN)

SIDNEY: (GRUNTING) That's it. To you. Over your end a bit. Right. Now - over the top with it.

EFFECTS: (WHISTLE. TERRIFIC CRASH)

MOIRA: Fluffy, wasn't it?

SIDNEY: Where's Hancock? Why isn't he giving us a hand? Where is he?

BILL: He's talking through the keyhole to one of the enemy.

SLIGHT FADE IN

TONY: ….Of course this isn't my fault you know. I mean, I admit I'm not a cook. Well you tasted it didn't you?
ALAN: It was horrible.
TONY: I know, I had a bar of chocolate meself. No, you see, I was in the Army, but not as a cook. I was in the Artillery.
ALAN: So was I.
TONY: Well of course you were. I recognise your eye through the keyhole.
ALAN: Bloodshot.
TONY: That's it, that's the one. Anyway, I was with the heavy stuff. Them Big Bertha's, you know.
ALAN: On the railway lines.
TONY: Well anyway, we were up the front at the time. Firing at the enemy. I think it was the enemy. Yes that's right. Well we whipped a shell in and it wouldn't go off.

Nothing happened. So the Captain..you remember him. Little fellow with a monocle in each eye.
ALAN: Wilson.
TONY: That's him. Bighead. Whatever became of him?
ALAN: Selling matches I think.
TONY: I think you're right. So anyway, he comes up to me and say's "Oi, the gun's blocked. Someone's got to crawl down the barrel and clean it out". And he looks straight at me. 'Cos we never got on you know. Well I told him straight, I wasn't crawling down any gun barrel. Well would you?....Of course you wouldn't. I mean I don't mind helping out. Doing me bit. But there's a limit. Crawl down a gun barrel? One Charlie gets a bit happy on the trigger and "pouf!" where are you? Well he had no right to expect it of me. I point blank refused. Well, that got up his nose. His moustache bristled. You could have cleaned your teeth with it. "That's an order" he said. "I'm not doing it", I said. So anyway, he pulled out his gun and talked me into it..and I was halfway down the barrel..cos I wasn't as well built as I am now.
ALAN: No, I remember you. Skinny bloke.
TONY: That's right, you knew me. So he says, "Can you see what's blocking it up?" So I said "Yes". He said "What?" I said "I am". Well that made him laugh. In spite of himself he had to laugh. His whole attitude towards me changed. From that moment he seemed to like me. He walked over to the gun, his whole body shaking with good natured laughter. A lovely smile came over his face...just like I'm smiling now, if only you could see me. And with a chuckle in his voice he said "Are you still down the barrel?" And I said "Yes sir". And do you know what he said then? "FIRE."

SIDNEY: Hancock, back to your post, they're attacking again.

EFFECTS: (BATTLE NOISES)

BILL: We'll never stop them, there's too many of them. We're done for.

TONY: I'll tell you what we'll do. Wait till it's dark - creep out of the barracks and grab the next train home. I'm finished with the Army after this.

GRAMS: LINK

TONY: ….So there it is Moira. We ducked out while they weren't looking and hot footed it home.

BILL: We're lucky to still be alive. Four thousand desperate men. I never want to face anything like that again.

MOIRA: Well, I'm glad you're back boys, we can at least be together for the rest of Christmas. And I've got a lovely surprise for you.

TONY: What?

MOIRA: Mother and Father are coming down to spend Boxing Day with us.

GRAMS: LINK

EFFECTS: (RAILWAY STATION ATMOSPHERE)

TONY: Two singles on the fast train to Aldershot please.

GRAMS: CLOSING THEME (UP & UNDER)

ADRIAN: You have been listening to "Hancock's Half Hour", featuring the lad himself, with Moira Lister, Bill Kerr, Sidney James and Kenneth Williams. Incidental music was composed by Wally Stott and recorded by the BBC Augmented Revue Orchestra, conducted by Harry Rabinowitz. The script was written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson - and the programme, which was recorded, was produced by Dennis Main Wilson.

GRAMS: "HANCOCK THEME" UP & TO END

(SEGUE)

GRAMS: PLAYOUT - TO END